

Plant Protection and Quarantine Stakeholder Meeting

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program invites interested stakeholders to participate in a public forum on December 9–10, 2003, at the Melrose Hotel in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the forum is to obtain feedback from stakeholders on the challenges PPQ must address if it is to remain a relevant and credible plant health organization.

The meeting's agenda contains a PPQ update addressing topics including, but not limited to:

- PPQ and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) partnering;
- Emerging issues;
- Innovative approaches for harmonizing quarantines; and
- Potential program impacts based on current economic forecasts.

Given the recent changes in PPQ's organizational structure and the transfer of certain agricultural quarantine and inspection activities to the newly established USDHS, the stakeholder meeting is particularly timely. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend and get involved in the future planning process. Continued stakeholder interest and participation is one of PPQ's top priorities.

In addition to the program update, five interactive panel discussions are planned:

- Pest risk assessments;
- Import permits and export certifications;
- The stakeholder role in USDHS;
- Strategic approaches to export; and
- Collaborative partnerships to implement incident command models in response to pest threats.

Panel participants are recognized leaders and experts from federal and state regulatory agencies, congressional committees, and key stakeholder groups.

Registration for the forum is free of charge, and guaranteed to the first 100 registrants. Interested stakeholders are encouraged to register online at www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/stakeholders/meeting/index.html by November 30.

Stakeholders needing hotel accommodations are asked to call (202) 955–6400 and register under the group name of USDA Stakeholders' Meeting. The Melrose Hotel is located at 2430 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. Stakeholders may also register for hotel accommodations online through a link on the PPQ Web site.

For further information, please contact Paula Henstridge, special assistant to the deputy administrator, PPQ, at (202) 720–1737.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Access the APHIS home page by pointing your Web browser to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>. For additional information on this topic, contact Dore Mobley at (301) 734–7255 or dore.m.mobley@aphis.usda.gov.

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